

**Before the  
Federal Communications Commission  
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
Implementation of Section 621(a)(1) of the Cable	)	MB Docket No. 05-311
Communications Policy Act of 1984 as Amended	)	
by the Cable Television Consumer Protection and	)	
Competition Act of 1992	)	

**COMMENTS OF DRACUT ACCESS TELEVISION**

Dracut Access Television, Inc. (DATV) who is the designated PEG provider for the town of Dracut, Massachusetts and a non-profit, 501(c) 3 organization appreciates the opportunity to file comments on the Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking ("FNPRM") in the above-referenced docket. We strongly oppose the tentative conclusions in the FNPRM that cable-related in-kind contributions are franchise fees and that local governments have no authority regarding cable operators' use of the rights of way to provide non-cable services.

The Town of Dracut, MA is a community of approximately 30,000 people. We have a single cable television provider (Comcast) who has a little over 10,000 cable TV subscribers in town. The most recently negotiated 10-year license with Comcast that was effective this past fall of 2017 provides 4.0% of Comcast's gross video revenues as the sole funding for DATV on a quarterly basis. An additional .25% of Comcast's gross video revenues are provided directly to the Town to fund a Technology account. The Town of Dracut, MA has a rich and proud history of Public Access television programming going back to 1981. Currently DATV provides hundreds of hours of original monthly programming content, thousands and thousands of hours since public access television began in town over 3 decades ago, programming that includes: *live municipal meeting coverage, Town meetings, local election results, school and recreational*

*sports, special events such as concerts, festivals, political advocacy programs, informational/teaching programs, etc.* DATV's dedicated staff and member producers and volunteers work very hard to provide extremely valuable information to the residents and cable television subscribers. Our outreach is aimed at all demographics both young and old providing training in many areas including: *studio production, post-production editing, multi-camera mobile productions, and much more.* DATV provides a voice and means of information that cannot be found in the mainstream media. The town of Dracut views public access television not as a luxury, but a necessity in the fabric of the town. Non-profits, schools, government departments, and residents utilize the services of DATV on a daily basis. The dissemination of emergency information, access to local government meetings and hearings, helping students to prepare for future education and career opportunities - these are by no means frivolous activities in the opinion of the town.

Reductions in the current franchise fees that fund Dracut Access Television, Inc. would have devastating effects on our ability to maintain the level of services that we provide to our members and to the town of Dracut, MA. We have worked very hard as of late on our plans to expand into a larger space to better serve our members and the town and the recently negotiated 4.0% in funding for the next 10 years played a critical part in our budget plan for build out designs and construction as well as equipment purchases.

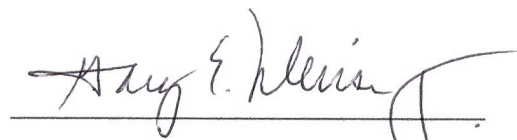
Respectfully, the Commission has concluded inaccurately that the monies and services returned to the Town are for the benefit of the municipality when it is far more appropriate to classify these as benefits to the community. Public rights of way are public property and the public should be compensated for their use. Since cable subscribers are already required to pay

franchise related costs, these rule changes would reduce their rights and benefits in a time of increasing subscription costs.

The Town of Dracut, MA also desires to retain the right to have input on the placement of equipment such as small cells, in a effort to safeguard the health and beauty of the town. Massachusetts has long cherished the notion of local franchising for cable related services because each municipality is unique. The FNPRM disregards this belief and allows cable television providers like Comcast to make decisions from afar that may well impact the quality of life in Dracut, MA.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has what many consider to be the strongest, most active presence of PEG stations providing hundreds of thousands of people with the means and the technology to share information, express their 1st amendment rights, and provide subscribers and residents with hyper-local programming that simply is not available anywhere else. The Town of Dracut, MA has a long and rich history with having public access television as an extremely important benefit for the lives in our community and should the Commission not reconsider its decision to begin allowing cable television providers to deduct the value of so called "in-kind" donations from the current, negotiated franchise fees commitment that Comcast has made to the Town, we fear that Dracut Access Television, Inc. will suffer dramatically from critical loss of funding and as a result will negatively impact the vital services we provide to the town of Dracut, Massachusetts.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Gary E. Meuse Jr.", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Gary E. Meuse Jr, *Executive Director*  
*Dracut Access Television, Inc.*